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(1) The *Kunak*-relationship is a contract between two men of different localities according to which they are obliged to offer mutual hospitality and protection whenever the occasion lends itself. Whenever a Caucasian passes near a fellow-*kunak's* village while travelling, he will infallibly pay him a visit and will lodge with him at least for the night. Restaurants, inns, and hotels are unknown among the mountaineers; the institution of *kunak*-relationship is however an excellent substitute. Any offense committed against the guest will be avenged as if it were against one of the family. In fact, the bond that unites the *kunaks* is considered as sacred as, if not more sacred than, the family tie. The institution is found throughout North Caucasia.[79] The question whether members of the two families may intermarry or not seems to have been overlooked by the fieldworkers. It may very well be that such marriages are even preferred. We know for certain that such marriages are not barred in Ossetia.[80]

(2) Another form of fictious kinship is the *tleush*.[81] According to Longworth it constitutes an impediment. The Cherkess, we are told, take an oath among themselves and become "brothers," and "to strengthen the illusion of their being such, their families are not allowed to intermarry; a regulation so rigidly observed, that even where the society is composed of many thousands, as in the case of the powerful one of Natquo, it still holds good, and a marriage between two individuals of it is looked upon as incestuous".[82]

(3) *Relationship by milk (parenté de lait, Milchverwandtschaft)* is a widespread institution. There are two ways in which the relationship can be formed: either by actual breast-sucking or by mere contact of the lips and breast of a woman.[83] The kinship thus formed is as sacred as that of consanguinity. Karginov describes how an Ossetine lover was once forced to kiss the breast of his beloved, the aim of the act being to put an end to their adulterous friendship, for once his lips would touch her breast he would become her "son." From that moment on intercourse and marriage would be looked upon as incestuous.[84] Gaerber wrote in 1728: "Whenever the Usnei has a son, he is carried round from village to village, and alternately suckled by every woman who has a child at her breast until he is weaned. This custom, by establishing a kind of brotherhood between the prince and his subjects, singularly endears

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[79] An excellent description of the *kunak*-relationship can be found in Dirr's article, "Aus dem Gewohnheitsrecht der kaukasischen Bergvölker," *Zeitschr. f. vergl. Rechtsw.*, XLI (1925). See also Interiano, *Della vita dei Zychi, chiamati Circassi*, Ramusio, II (1559), folio 140 v. M. Kovalevskij, *Coutume contemp.*, p. 190: Ossetes, Tartars, Kumyks have the practice too. N. Jakovlev, *Ingaši*, pp. 15—25.
Grabovskij, "Ekonomičeskij i domašnij byt žitelej gorskago učastka Ingulevskago okruga," SSKG, III (1870), pp. 4—7.
A. P. Berže, *Čečnja i Čečency*, pp. 86 f.
The host will even give up his life for his guest; see R. Erckert, *Der Kaukasus*, p. 108.

[80] M. Kovalevskij, *Coutume contemp.*, p. 214.

[81] For possible origin of the practice and ceremonies connected with the institution see V. V. Vasil'kov, "Očerk byta temirgoevcev," SMOMPK, XXIX (1901), No. 1, pp. 80 f.

[82] *A Year among the Circassians*, I, p. 229.

[83] Dubrovin, *Istorija*, Tome I, Bk. I, pp. 439 f.

[84] S. Karginov, "Krovavaja mest' u osetin," SMOMPK, XLIV (1914), No. 3, p. 283.

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582 608 853 them to each other."[85] The Utsmi or Usmi were rulers of Kaitag, said to date from the Arab conquest in the eighth century or soon after.[86] The custom of the Usmi did more than merely endear the baby prince to his subjects. The inhabitants actually considered the prince their foster-brother and for him they were ready to die, for milk-relationship implied as strong a tie as that of consanguinity.[87] The anonymous *Tagebuch* (p. 59)[88] gives us another example: an Ingush "murderer of an only son flies to the mother and, dagger in hand, compels her to give him her breast. Other relatives demand blood-revenge, but the woman, whose right it is to decide, says 'now that he has sucked my breast, if you kill him I lose *two* sons,' and the murderer's life is spared."[89]

Both forms of adoption, by actual and by ceremonial breastsucking, are in full accord with the *šarī'a*. According to the Koran, iv. 27, relationship by milk constitutes an impediment as stringent as that of blood propinquity. Excluded from marriage are the woman and her adopted child; the child and all those suckled by the same woman; the child with all his descendents and the woman who suckled him with all her milk and blood relatives and those of her husband. Such kinship is known in Islamic law as *raḍâ* or *raḍâ'h*[90]

It is difficult to determine just in how far the Caucasian practice is dependent on that of Islamism. The explorers and *adat* collectors fail to tell us to what degree marriage between milk-relatives is looked upon as incestuous. In all probability the institution existed in the Caucasus long before the introduction of the Koran. It seems to be pre-Islamic for various reasons. First of all, the custom is not limited to Mohammedan Caucasians but is found among Christian tribes as well, for example in Armenia.[91] Moreover it is very difficult to imagine that a *mere* ceremony, and a *foreign* one at that, could dispense a Caucasian from the most sacred obligation of avenging the blood of a murdered relative. Anyone who has studied Caucasian customary law will admit that perhaps no *adats* are so unchangeable as those regarding blood-feuds. It is unintelligible how an imported ceremony, especially among tribes that have been converted to Islamism rather recently and then only half-heartedly, could change these almost unchangeable *adats*. Finally, relationship by milk is neither an Islamic invention nor restricted to Mohammedan countries (it is found, for example, also among the nomadic peoples of Asia); it could exist in the Caucasus independently of Mohammedanism too.

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[85] G. Ellis, *Memoir of a map of the countries comprehended between the Black Sea and the Caspian nations and vocabularies of their languages*, London, 1788, pp. 40 f.

[86] Baddeley, *The Rugged Flanks of Caucasus*, II, p. 18, note. Ellis, *l. c.*

[87] Baddeley, *l. c.*

[88] *Tagebuch einer Reise, die im Jahr 1781 von der Gränzfestung Mosdok nach dem innern Caucasus unternommen worden*, Leipzig and St. Petersburg, 1797. A certain Steder is the author.

[89] Baddeley, *op. cit.*, I, p. 262.
U. Laudaev, "Priměčanija k statě čečenskoe plemja," SMOMPK, VI (1872), p. 50.

[90] Th. W. Juynboll, *Handbuch des islâmischen Gesetzes nach der Lehre der schâfitischen Schule nebst einer allgemeinen Einleitung*, p. 219.

[91] Baddeley, *op. cit.*, I, p. 263.